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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 IO-13 ACDA-10 OMB-01 SIL-01 LAB-04 EB-07
/105 W
----------231656Z 005321 /41
R 231205Z MAY 77
FM AMCONSUL BELFAST
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1687
INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 180

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, UK, EI
SUBJECT: LOCAL ELECTIONS - RESULTS

REF: BELFAST 177

1. FINAL RESULTS OF MAY 18 ELECTIONS FOR 26 COUNCILS IN NORTHERN IRELAND IN TERMS OF NUMBERS OF COUNCIL SEATS COMPARED WITH 1973 ELECTION FOLLOW. IT WAS A GENERALLY LOW TURN-OUT IN ULSTER TERMS, 60 PER CENT:

	1977	1973
OFFICIAL UNIONISTS	179	215
SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP)	113	83
DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY	74	13
ALLIANCE	70	63
INDEPENDENT	40	59
UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST		

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PARTY (BAIRD)	11	-
INDEPENDENT UNIONIST	10	69
UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND	7	-
REPUBLICAN CLUBS	6	7
VANGUARD UNIONIST (CRAIG)	5	-
NATIONALIST (REPUBLICAN)	4	4
UNITY (REPUBLICAN)	3	6

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COMMUNITY	2	-
NORTHERN IRELAND LABOUR PARTY	1	4
NEWTOWNABBEY LABOUR	1	-
REPUBLICAN INDEPENDENT	-	3

2. EIGHTEEN OF 26 COUNCILS ARE IN UNIONIST OR LOYALIST CONTROL. OFFICIAL UNIONISTS HOLD MAJORITY SEATS BANBRIDGE AND ANTRIM AND DEMOCRATIC UNINNISTS TOOK BALLYMENA. COMBINATIONS OF UNIONIST/LOYALIST PARTIES CONTROL ARDS, ARMAGH, BALLYMONEY, CARRICKFERGUS, CASTLEREAGH, BELFAST, COLERAINE, COOKSTOWN, NORTH DOWN, CRAIGAVON, NEWTOWNABBEY, MAGHERALFELT, LARNE, LIMAVADY AND LISBURN. ALLIANCE HOLDS BALANCE OF POWER BETWEEN UNIONIST AND SDLP-INDEPENDENT BLOCS ON TWO COUNCILS - DOWN AND OMAGH. "NATIONALIST" COUNCILLORS, INCLUDING SDLP, ARE IN MAJORITY IN FIVE COUNCILS, NEWRY AND MOURNE, LONDONDERRY, STRABANE, MOYLE AND FERMANAGH.

3. SDLP AND ALLIANCE ARE JUBILANT WHILE OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, PUBLICLY CONFIDENT, ARE QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT DECLINE IN INFLUENCE. IN BELFAST, ON 51 PERSON COUNCIL OFFICIAL UNIONISTS DROPPED TO 15 SEATS FROM 24 AND WILL BE FORCED TO NEGOTIATE AGREEMENTS WITH DUP (7), UPNI (2), INDEPENDENT UNIONISTS (2) AND ONE "COMMUNITY" COUNCILLOR (UNIONIST). ALLIANCE TOOK 13 IN BELFAST, SDLP 8, AND REPUBLICAN CLUBS 3. IN LONDONDERRY SDLP HAS 13 SEATS, OFFICIAL UNIONISTS 6, NATIONALISTS 4, ALLIANCE 2, DUP 2.

4. RESULTS SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT TO INTERPRET. THERE SOME UNCLASSIFIED

VOTER APATHY DUE IN PART TO LIMITED ATTRIBUTIONS OF COUNCILS. IT APPEARS THAT PAISLEY' S DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS ATTRACTED ABOUT THE SAME PROPORTION OF VOTERS AS IN THE GENERAL POPULATION THAT SUPPORTED THE GENERAL STRIKE (ABOUT 12 PERCENT). TREND CANNOT BE ESTABLISHED HERE SINCE DUP DID NOT RPT NOT CAMPAIGN SERIOUSLY IN 1973 AND THEIR SUCCESS IS ACTUALLY FRACTIONALLY LOWER (2 PERCENT), IN TERMS OF PERCENTAGE OF VOTE, IF COMPARED WITH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION ELECTION OF 1975. ON OTHER SIDE, DESPITE ALLIANCE SUCCESSES IT WOULD BE PREMATURE TO CONCLUDE NEW ERA OF MODERATION HAS DAWNED IN NORTHERN IRELAND. OFFICIAL UNIONISTS REMAIN LARGEST PARTY IN ULSTER AND, WHILE LEADERSHIP CURRENTLY BEING CRITICIZED BY SOME WITHIN PARTY, A CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUE WOULD QUICKLY RALLY THE CRITICS. PARTY LEADER HARRY WEST IS TO MEET WITH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND ROY MASON TODAY AT THE LATTER'S REQUEST AND SHOULD BE ABLE SUBSEQUENTLY TO ANNOUNCE SOME CONCESSION, HOWEVER MINOR, AS A REWARD FOR OPPOSING LOYALIST STRIKE.

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, DATA
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Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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